



HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING AT THE BLACK HOUSE, LOWER RAINHAM ROAD, RAINHAM, GILLINGHAM, KENT

January 2019

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Front cover: 20th century photograph of the site (looking south-east)

Plates 1-16 Aerial photographs and building details

Appendix 1. Building description

Drawings 1-16

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In April 2013 Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIFA.,IHBC., carried out a historic building recording of the hearth and chimney at The Black House, Lower Rainham Road, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent (Drawings 1-16). The building is presently unoccupied and is undergoing development with the chimney to be demolished, the timber-framed cottage moved to a new location and the chimney rebuilt.

1.2 The building recording was carried out in April 2013 in accordance with a Level 3 survey as detailed in the English Heritage publication '*Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice*' (2016). *The Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (2014) and the *KCC Historic Building Recording Requirements Part C*.

This is essentially an analytical record and will comprise an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the buildings origins, development and use. It will also include all drawn and photographic records that may be required to illustrate the buildings appearance and structure and support an historic analysis. A Level 3 record may also be appropriate when the fabric of the building is under threat, but time and resources are insufficient to allow for detailed documentary research, or where the scope for such research is limited.

1.3 In summary the work consists of an analytic record of the infilled hearth and chimney in the western elevation accompanied by digital photographs and plans.

1.4 The principal elements of the survey involved the creation of a record and description of the historic fabric of the hearth and chimney.

1.5 A review of Historic OS mapping has been made (Maps 1-5) and the Pevsner Architectural Guide (*Kent, North East and East 2013*) was consulted as was the National Heritage Register for England.

1.6 This report consists of a descriptive report accompanied by digital photographs and annotated plans (Plates 1-16).

2.0 HISTORICAL/ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Location

The Black House is located alongside the B2204 Lower Rainham Road approximately half way between the town of Gillingham to the west and Lower Rainham to the east. The Black House stands as an isolated structure on the northern side of Lower Rainham Road on the southern perimeter of Riverside Country Park. The site is marked as 'Shed Farm' on some earlier maps. The building is to be relocated within the same plot, slightly further north of the present building and away from Lower Rainham Road. The OS location of The Black House is NGR 80730 68158 (Figure 1).

2.2 Setting

The Black House is located within an area that is predominately rural but the area has a suburban feel to it with residential properties close by and these include Lower Rainham to the east, Pump Farm to the south-east and Manor Farm to the south-west and the Riverside Country Park to the north. The cottage itself is set on a level site and to the north of a tarmac road called Lower Rainham Road that allows access to the property. The OS height on site is about 5.00m aOD and the Bedrock Geology is said to be by the British Geological Survey undifferentiated clay, silt, sand and gravel Head deposit which caps white chalk of the Seaford Chalk Formation. Archaeological test-pitting within the footprint of the present building suggests localised deposits of Head Brickearth are present within the site.

2.3 Statutory Designation

The Black House is a Grade II Listed timber framed building (HER No. TQ 86 NW 200) and is of likely late sixteenth or early to mid seventeenth century date. The building has fallen into a state of disrepair, with some emergency repairs undertaken in 1994-5 to prevent the buildings collapse. The house is of particular interest as a rare survival of a relatively unaltered farmworker's cottage of humble origins with its main construction periods 1600 to 1688. The building is currently of two stories, with two cells on each, although the framing suggests the cottage originally comprised three bays (Drawings 1-16).

Evaluation trenching within and next to Black House by Canterbury Archaeological Trust has been undertaken and internally evidence of deposits relating to the floors of the present building were found. These sealed earlier features associated with medieval domestic occupation on the site (TQ 86 NW 201). Trenching outside the building uncovered the location of a robbed out later chimney stack and a brick floor of an associated small building shown on the first three Ordnance Survey 6" maps (Maps 3-5). Its original function is unclear, but it was later used as a coal shed. The date of its construction and demolition are also not clear (CAT Report March 2003).

2.4 Significance of the Building

The significance of the building lies in its contribution to the rural scene with its substantially intact frame of a three bay 17th century farm workers cottage.

2.5 Historic Background

A rapid map assessment of OS historic mapping shows that in 1795 the Ordnance Survey Surveyors Drawing shows that the building was of a rectangular shape in its own plot of land fronting the Lower Rainham Road (MAP 2).

The OS map of 1864 shows that the building is now L-shaped with an extension to the north (Map 3).

By 1895 the OS map shows that the building is now rectangular and opposite a larger farmhouse on the other side of the road called 'Alfred Place' (Map 4).

The OS map of 1938 shows that just to the west quarry works have started with the haul road to the Medway constructed just to the west of The Black House (Map 5).

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING

3.1 Exterior

3.2 The building is a farmhouse worker's cottage, converted and derelict at time of survey. The building probably dates to the early-mid 17th century with later mid 19th century windows. Timber-frame clad in weatherboarding with brick end wall, and corrugated-iron roof hipped to west end.

3.3 Two-bay hall house, originally with smoke bay at east end. North front has one mid 19th century square casement window but others are concealed by weather boarding. The structure appears to be the two surviving bays of a three-bay house. Opening at first-floor level on north front indicates that the west first-floor room was used for storage (Drawings 6-10).

4. INTERIOR

4.1 The interior of the building has a complete frame except for east wall, which was rebuilt in brick when former lath and plaster smoke bay was converted to a chimney (Drawings 1-5).

4.2 Ground-floor east room has chamfered spine beam with lamb's tongue stop, west room has chamfered floor hoists.

4.3 Eighteenth century wooden winder stair (Plates 13-14).

4.4 First-floor 17th century floorboards and fireplace with wooden bressumer and curved back. Roof has coupled rafters without ridge piece, collar beams with carpenter's marks and lath and plaster partition. Frame has jowled posts and diagonal tension braces (Plates 5-6).

4.5 The large fireplace on the ground floor was rebuilt and reduced in size in the early 19th century and a four-panelled door to the winder stair added.

4.6 The fireplace is built of red to pink slightly frogged clay bricks measuring 220mm in length and width of 100mm and height of 70mm laid in a Flemish Bond and set in a pale creamy yellow brown fine sandy lime mortar mix of about 18mm thick (Drawing 11 and Plates 7-10).

4.7 The Phase 1 build had an arched opening springing from two brick piers with a surviving brick tilt on the upper courses. It is likely at this stage the building did not have an upper floor but the chimney stack was rebuilt as

Phase 2 with an additional fireplace on the upper floor and an additional flue (Drawing 11 and Plates 5-6).

4.8 As part of the Phase 2 rebuild the arched opening on the ground floor was dismantled and replaced by a 19th century brick soldier course sitting on iron bars. In addition two side walls were added, ground floor levels reduced and a winding staircase added and the access closed with machine cut timber T & G boarding fitted vertically with a later Victorian panelled door (Drawing 11 and Plates 7-10).

5.0 DISCUSSION

5.1 Behind the weatherboarding is the substantially intact frame of a three-bay 17th century farmhouse which will be moved to a new location. The brick internal fireplace will need to be numbered and de-constructed in a recorded manner to enable reconstruction at the new location site (Figure 1 & Plate 15).

6.0 PARAMETERS

5.1 The photographic survey was conducted using digital photography and as the exterior of the building was available no drone coverage of the exterior of the building was undertaken..

5.2 The site survey took place in April 2013 and the watching brief on the new groundworks for the new location of the building from April 14th to 19th.

No archaeological features or remains were revealed by the trenching (Plate 16).

Paul Wilkinson PhD., MCIfA., FRSA

24/01/2019

7. References

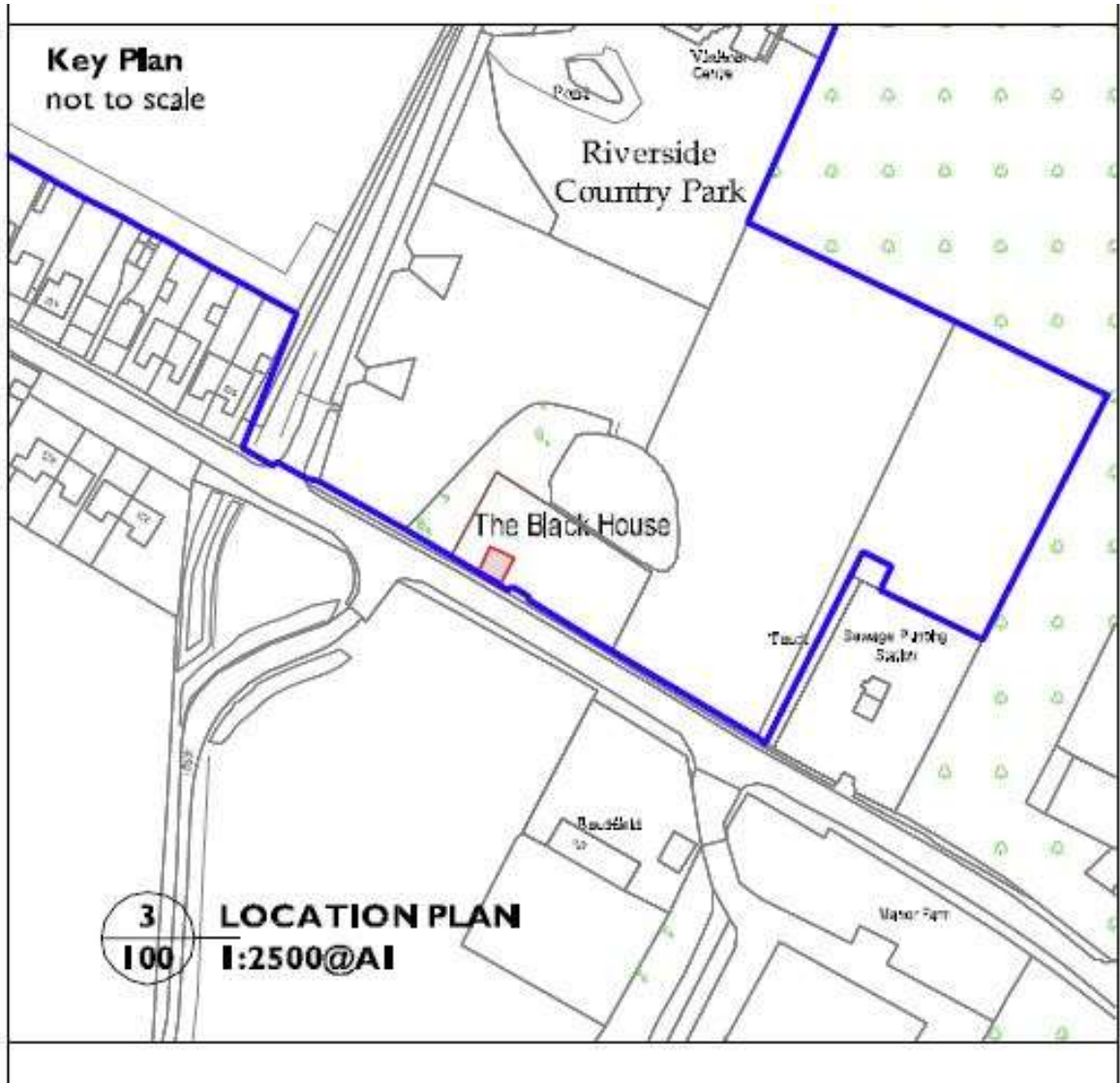
Canterbury Archaeological Trust, March 2003 *An Archaeological Evaluation in advance of a proposed refurbishment of the Black House, Lower Rainham Road, Gillingham, Kent*

English Heritage, 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*

The National Heritage List for England (accessed 22nd January 2017)

Institute of Field Archaeologists, *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (2008).

Pevsner Architectural Guide (*Kent, West and the Weald* 2012)



MAP 1. Location of The Black House (looking north)



Plate 1. 2018 aerial showing The Black House in its new location

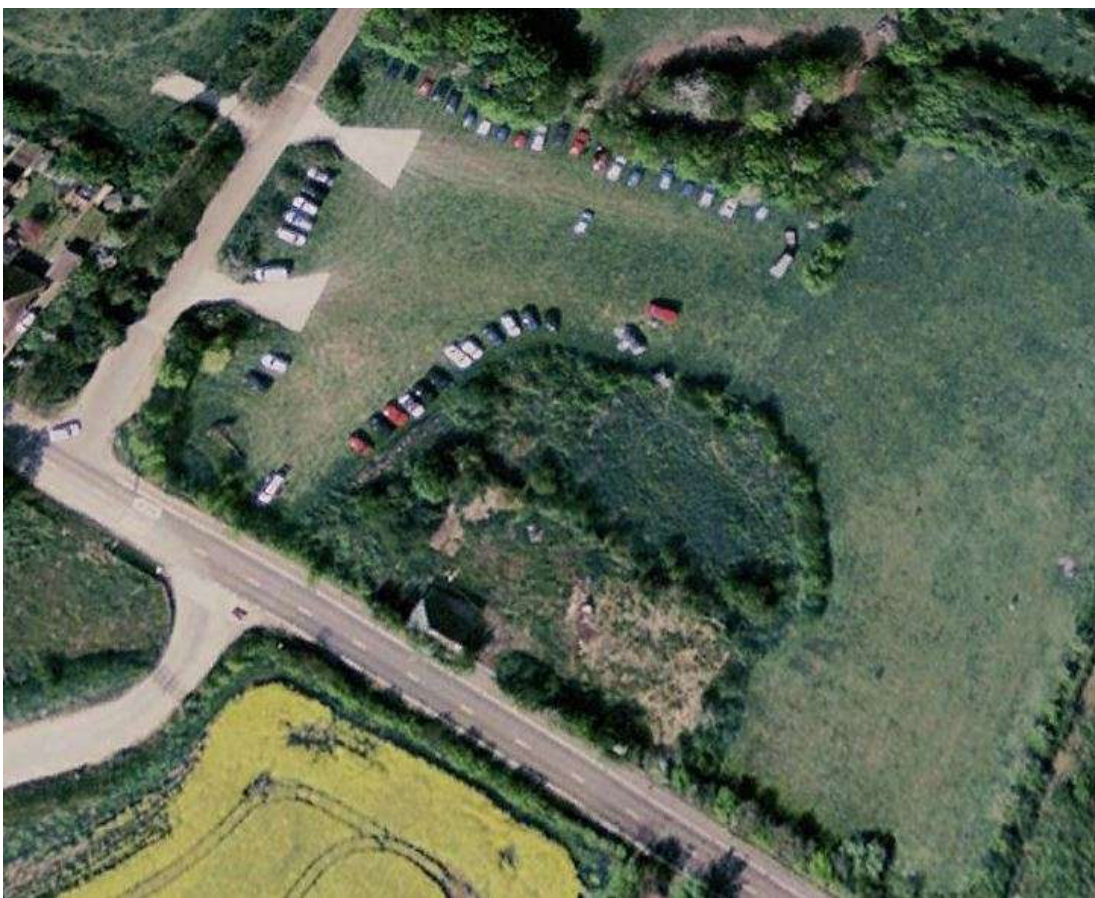


Plate 2. 2007 aerial showing The Black House in its old location

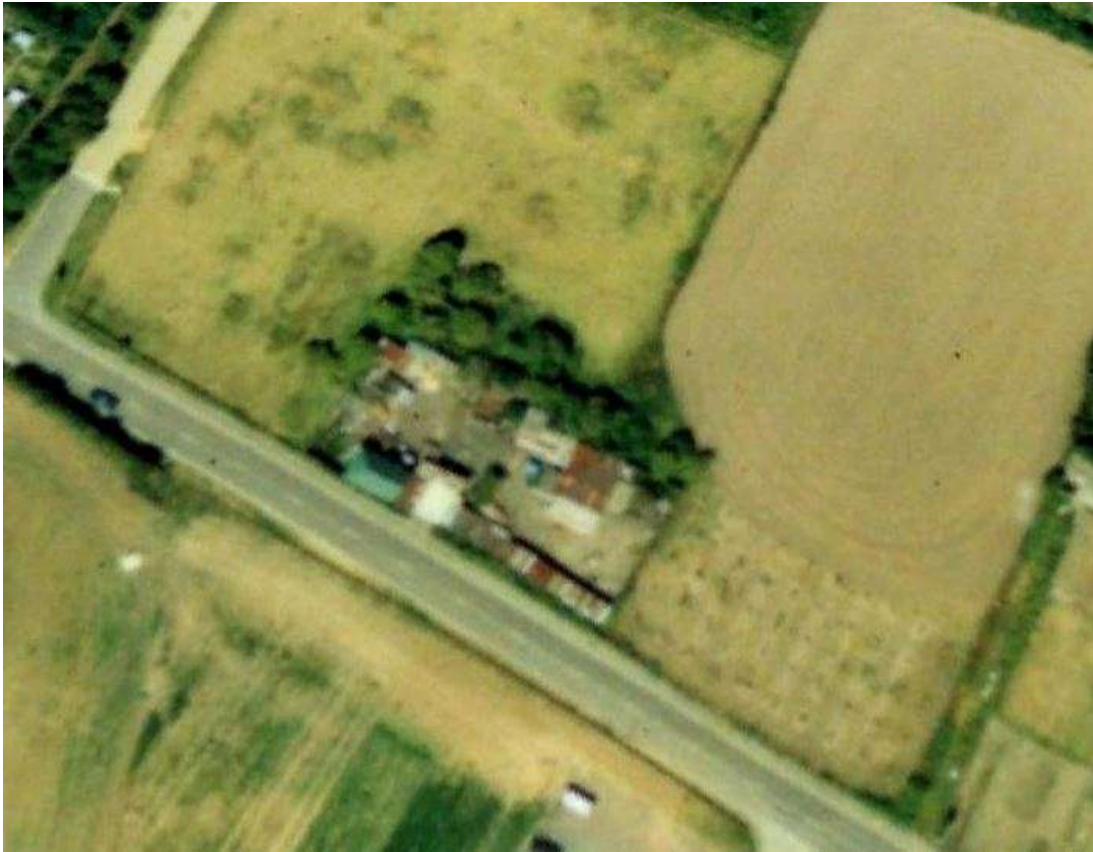


Plate 3. 1990 aerial showing yard activity

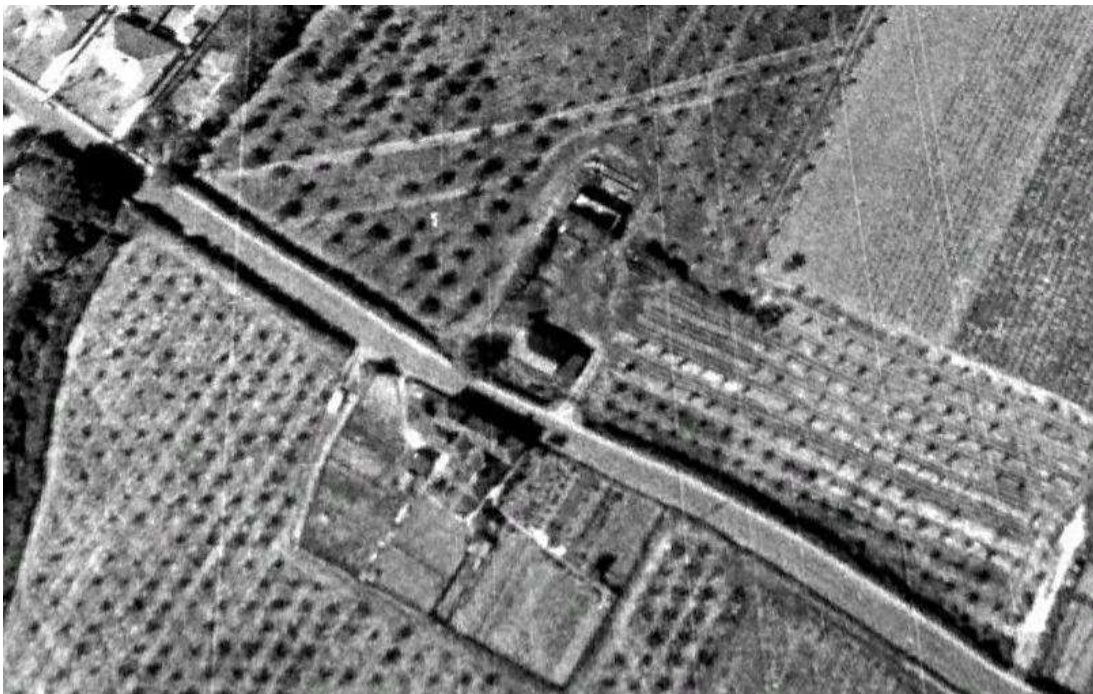


Plate 4. 1960 showing additional buildings to the north and south



Map 2. 1795 OS location of site



Map 3. 1864 OS location of site



Map 4. 1895 OS location of site



Map 5. 1938 OS location of site



Plate 5. First Floor (looking east)



Plate 6. First Floor (looking NNE)



Plate 7. Ground Floor – close up fireplace



Plate 8. Ground Floor – close up fireplace



Plate 9. Ground Floor – close up fireplace



Plate 10. Ground Floor – close up fireplace



Plate 11. Chimney flue



Plate 12. Chimney flue



Plate 13. Stairs to the right of chimney



Plate 14. Detail of stairs



Plate 15. Plate 16 (below) The Black House under preparation for moving and view of trenches being watched

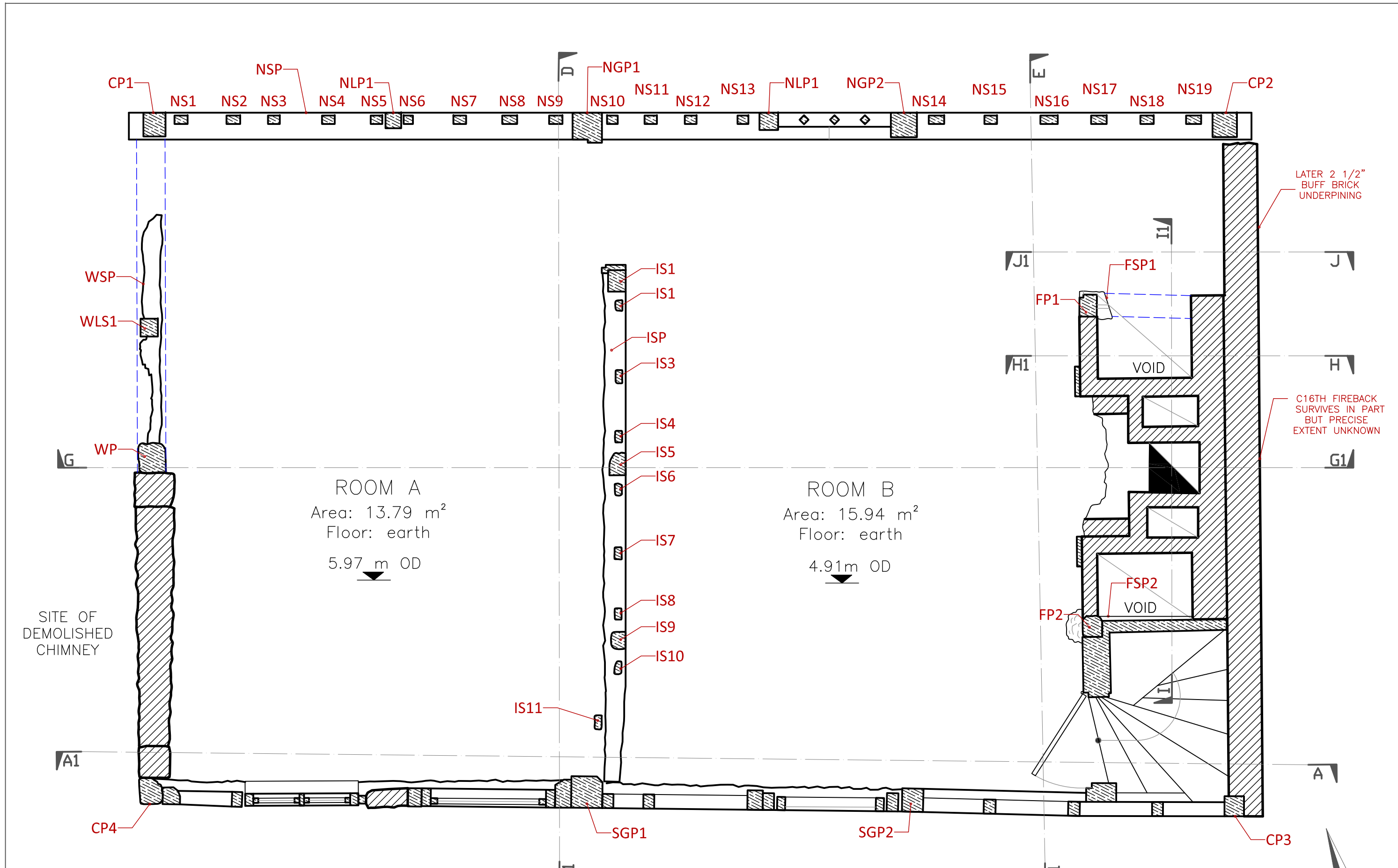


Appendix 1

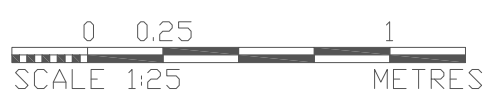
HISTORIC BUILDINGS SURVEY:

Summary Sheet

Property Name The Black House	Address Lower Rainham Road, Gillingham, Kent	Building Name The Black House
Property/ Building Reference	OS Grid Reference NGR 80730 68158	Surveyor/Date of Survey Paul Wilkinson 18 th April 2013
Category Residential	Original Use Residential	Current Use Residential
Date(s) of Construction The building is a Grade II Listed timber framed building of likely 16 th or early mid 17 th century date	Statutory Designation (s) Grade II Listed	HER Reference TQ 86 NW 200
Walling Materials Wall construction is of timber framed construction infilled with brick/wattle and daub	Roofing Materials Steel corrugated sheeting	Flooring Materials timber
Description: The Black House is a Grade II Listed timber framed building of likely late sixteenth or early to mid seventeenth century date. The building has fallen into a state of disrepair, with some emergency repairs undertaken in 1994-5 to prevent the buildings collapse. The house is of particular interest as a rare survival of a relatively unaltered farmworker's cottage of humble origins. The building is currently of two stories, with two cells on each, although the framing suggests the cottage originally comprised three bays.		
Architectural/Historic Significance: The building is significant as part of the rural group showing how the small holding had developed and adapted over time.		Landscape Significance: The significance of the building is its rare survival as an example of a farmworker's cottage
Notes/Qualifications Regarding Survey: The survey was undertaken whilst the building was empty and prior to development which enabled access to most parts of the building apart from the roof space.		



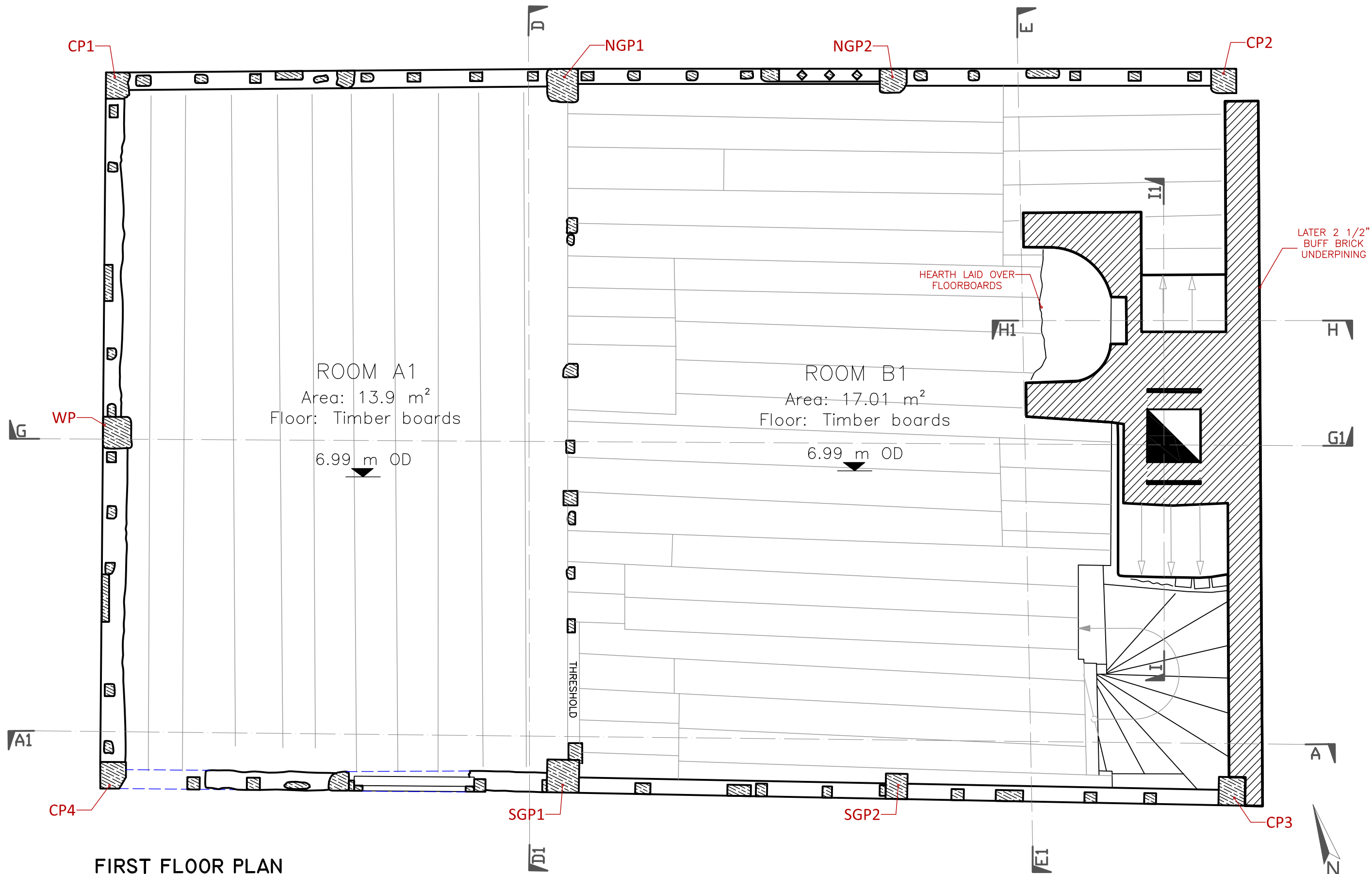
GROUND FLOOR PLAN



LEGEND:
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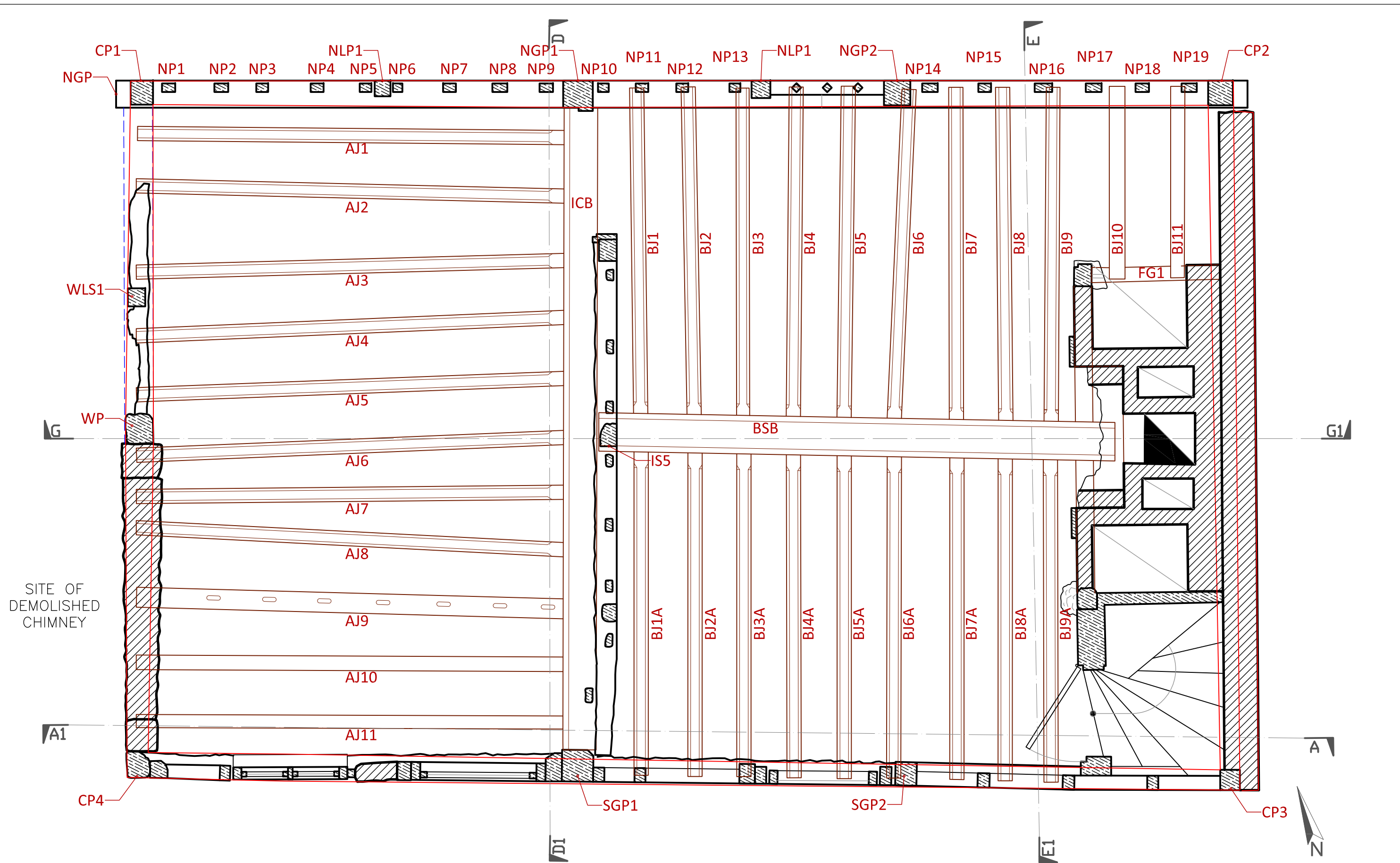
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



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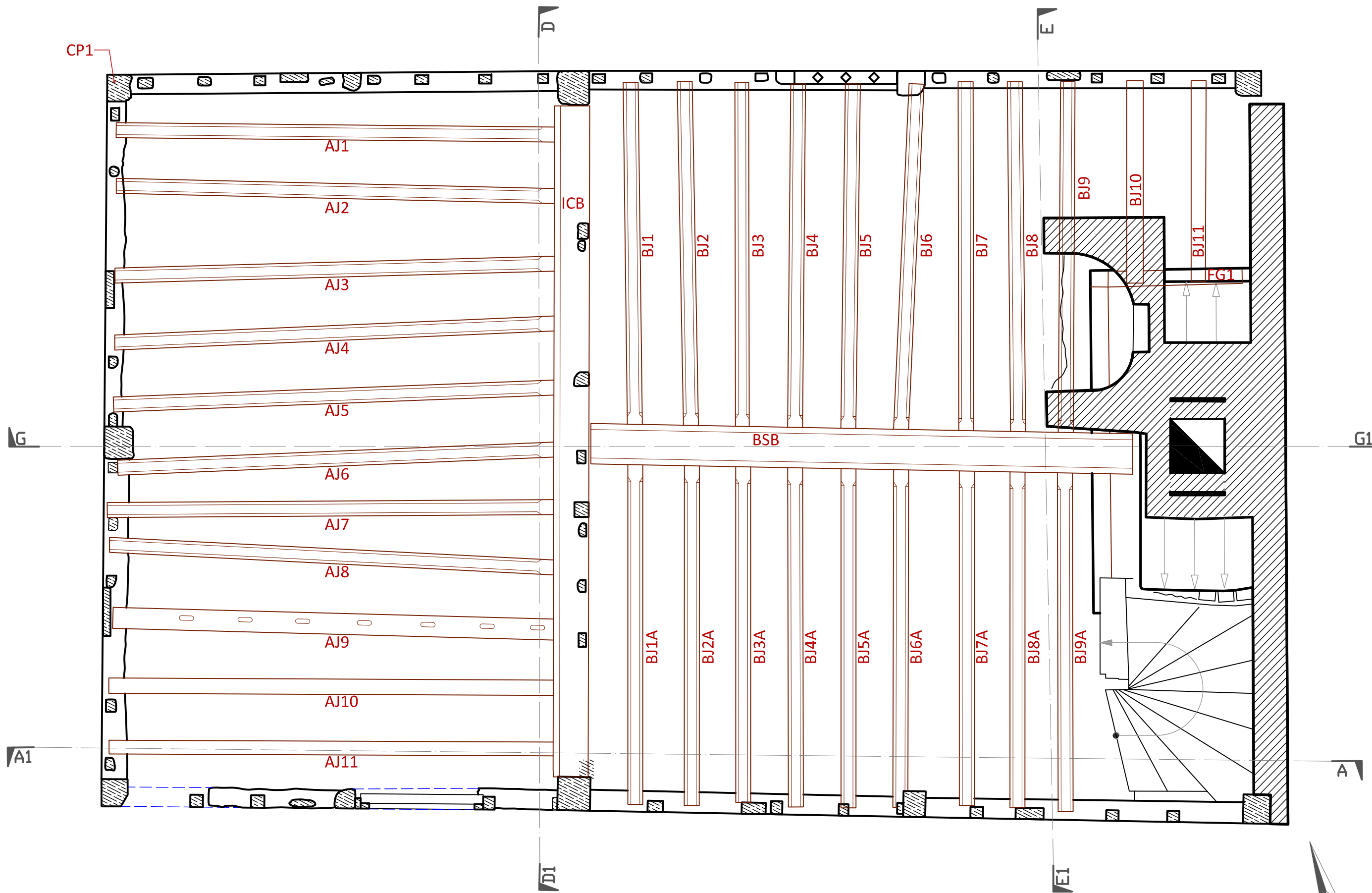


GROUND FLOOR PLAN WITH REFLECTED VIEW OF THE FIRST FLOOR JOISTS AND BEAMS



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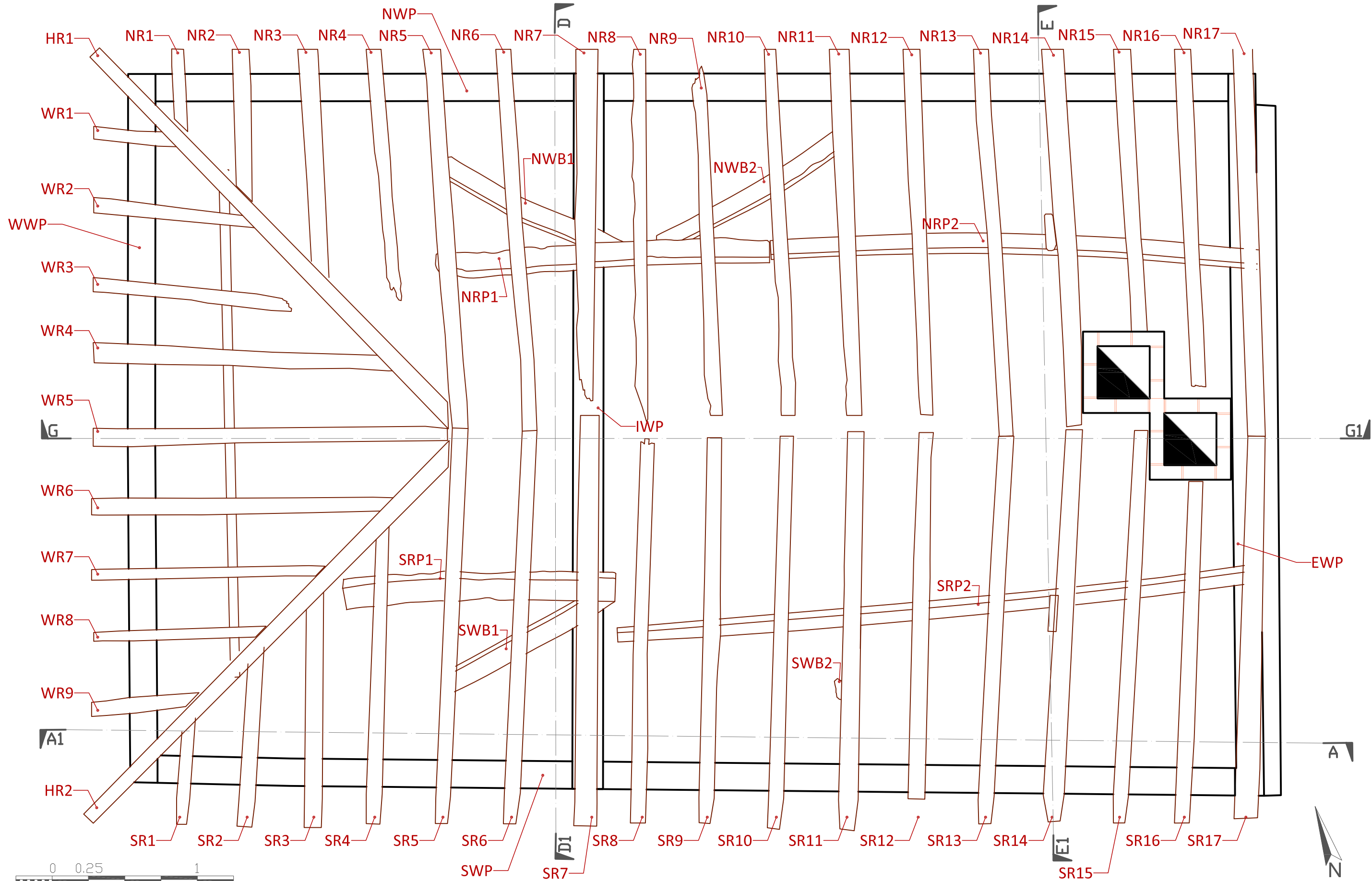


FIRST FLOOR PLAN WITHOUT FLOOR BOARDS

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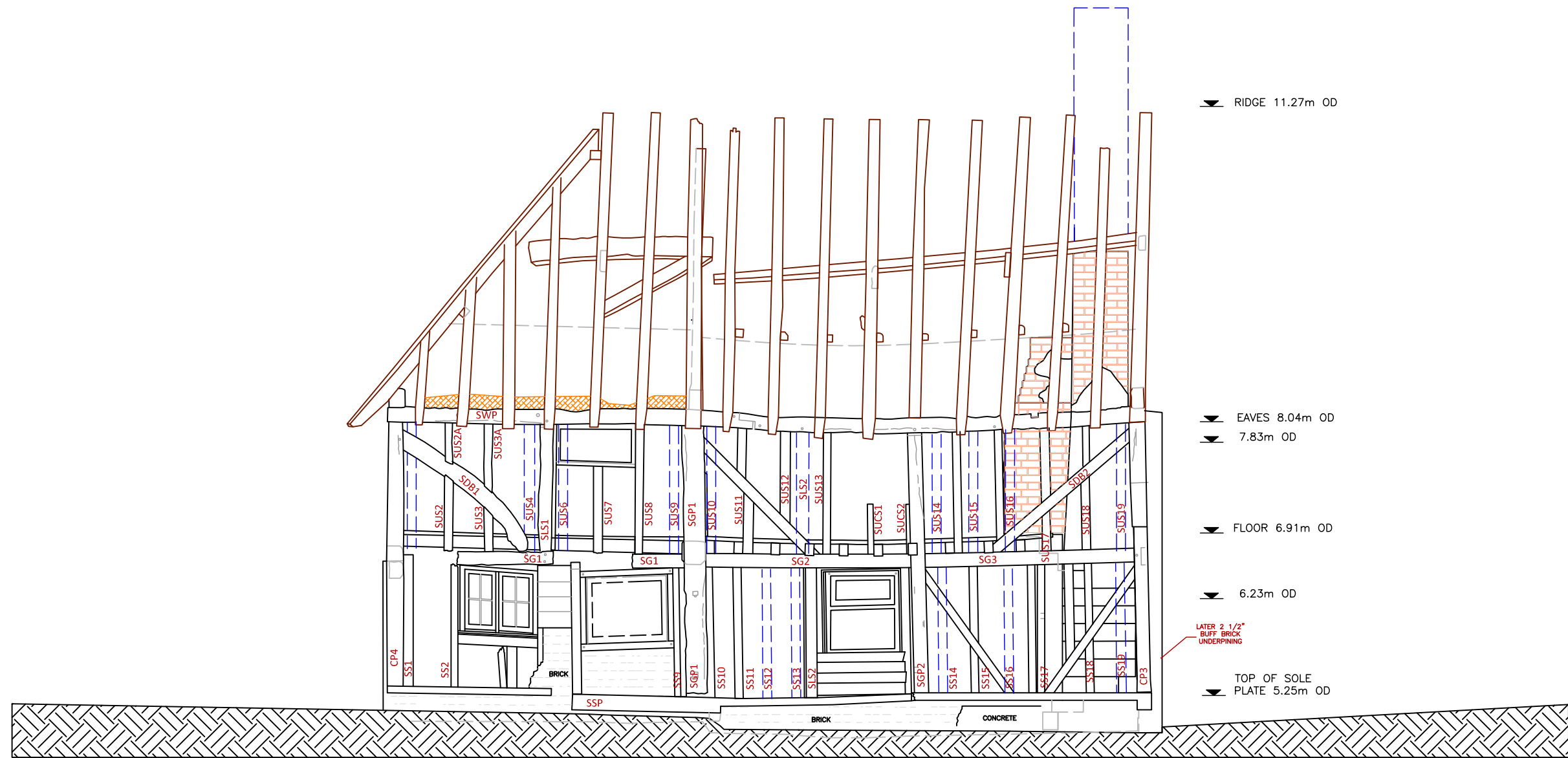


ROOF PLAN

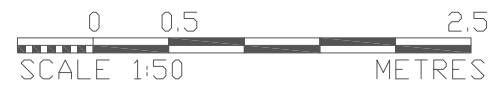
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SOUTH ELEVATION

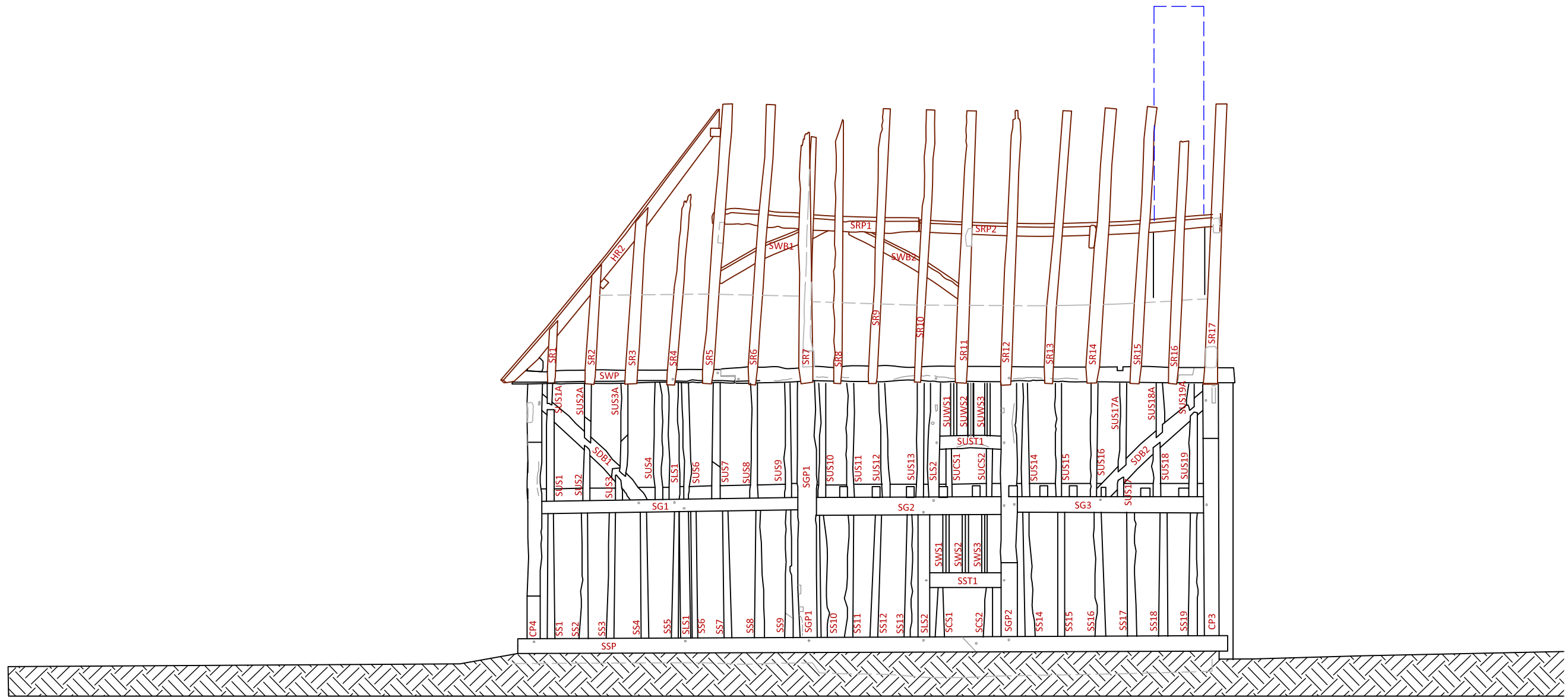


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SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY
 The Office: School Farm
 Oast, Graveney Road,
 Faversham, Kent ME13 8UP





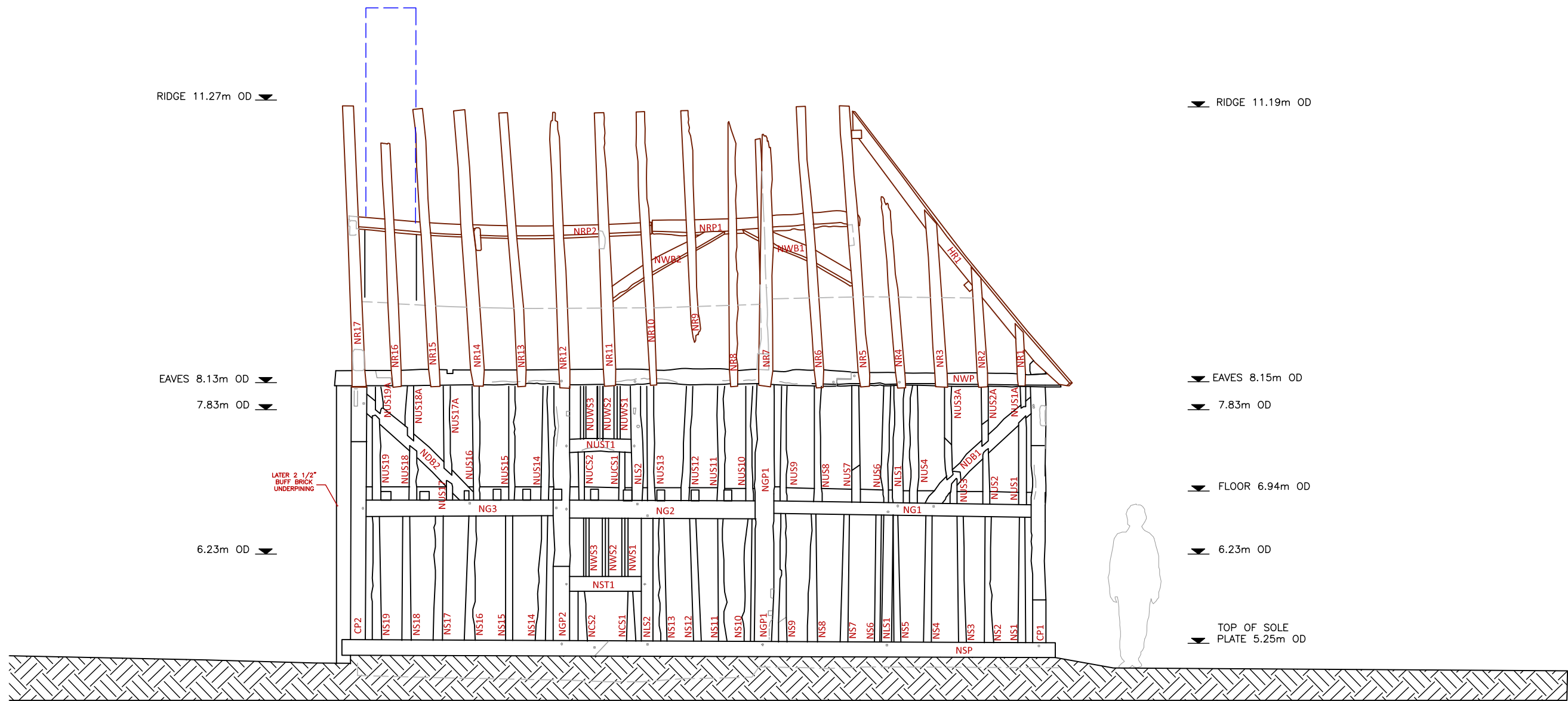
SOUTH ELEVATION - RECONSTRUCTION



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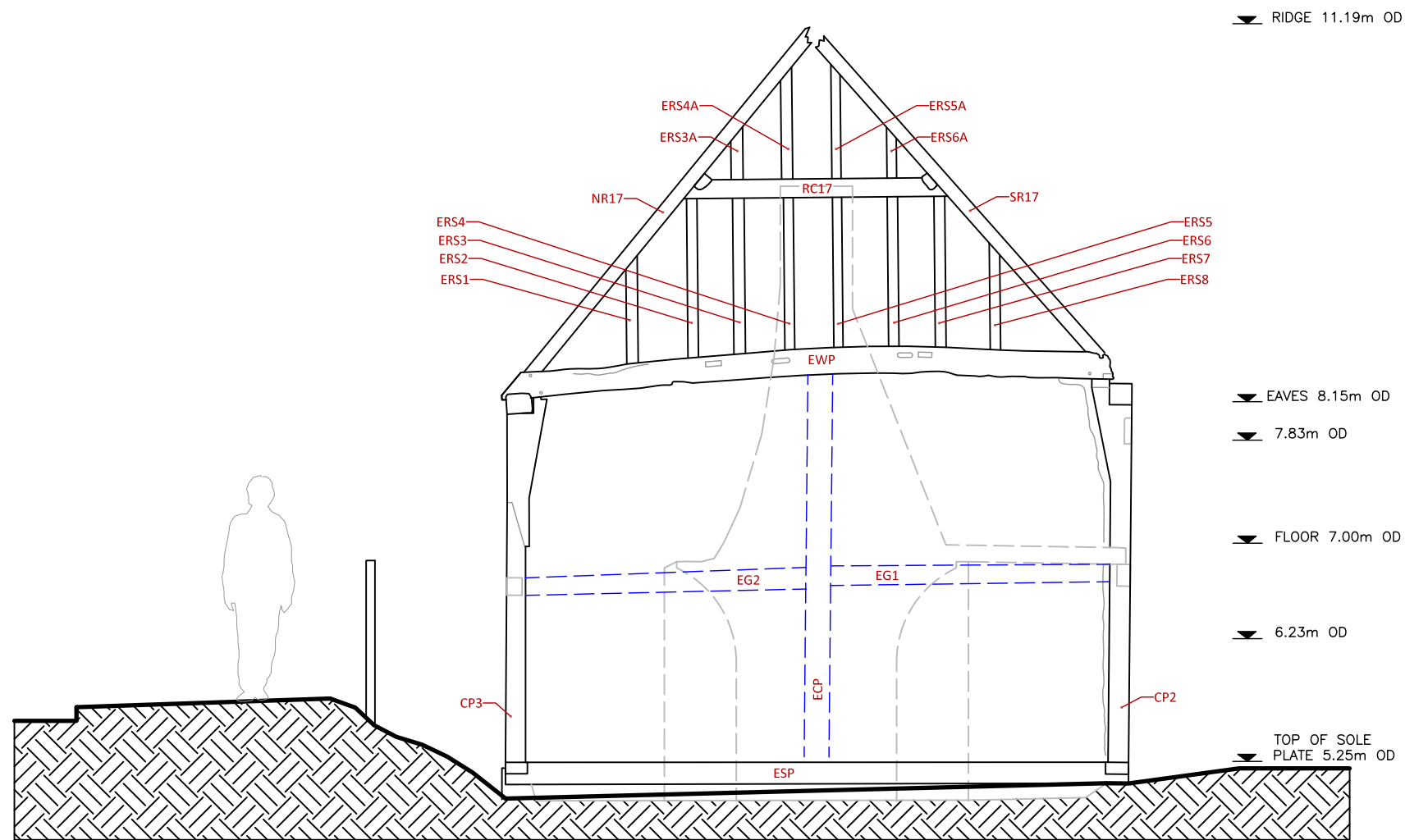
NORTH ELEVATION



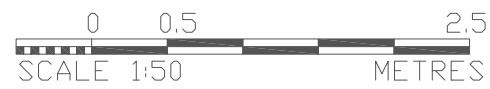
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EAST ELEVATION



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PROJECT: BLACK HOUSE

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DRAWING NUMBER: 10

DATE: 29/03/2016

SITE CODE: BH-BR15

DRAWN BY: BARTOSZ CICHY

REF. FILE: BLACKHOUSE2016.DWG

SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY

The Office: School Farm
Oast, Graveney Road,
Faversham, Kent ME13 8UP



RIDGE 11.19m OD ▼

EAVES 8.15m OD ▼

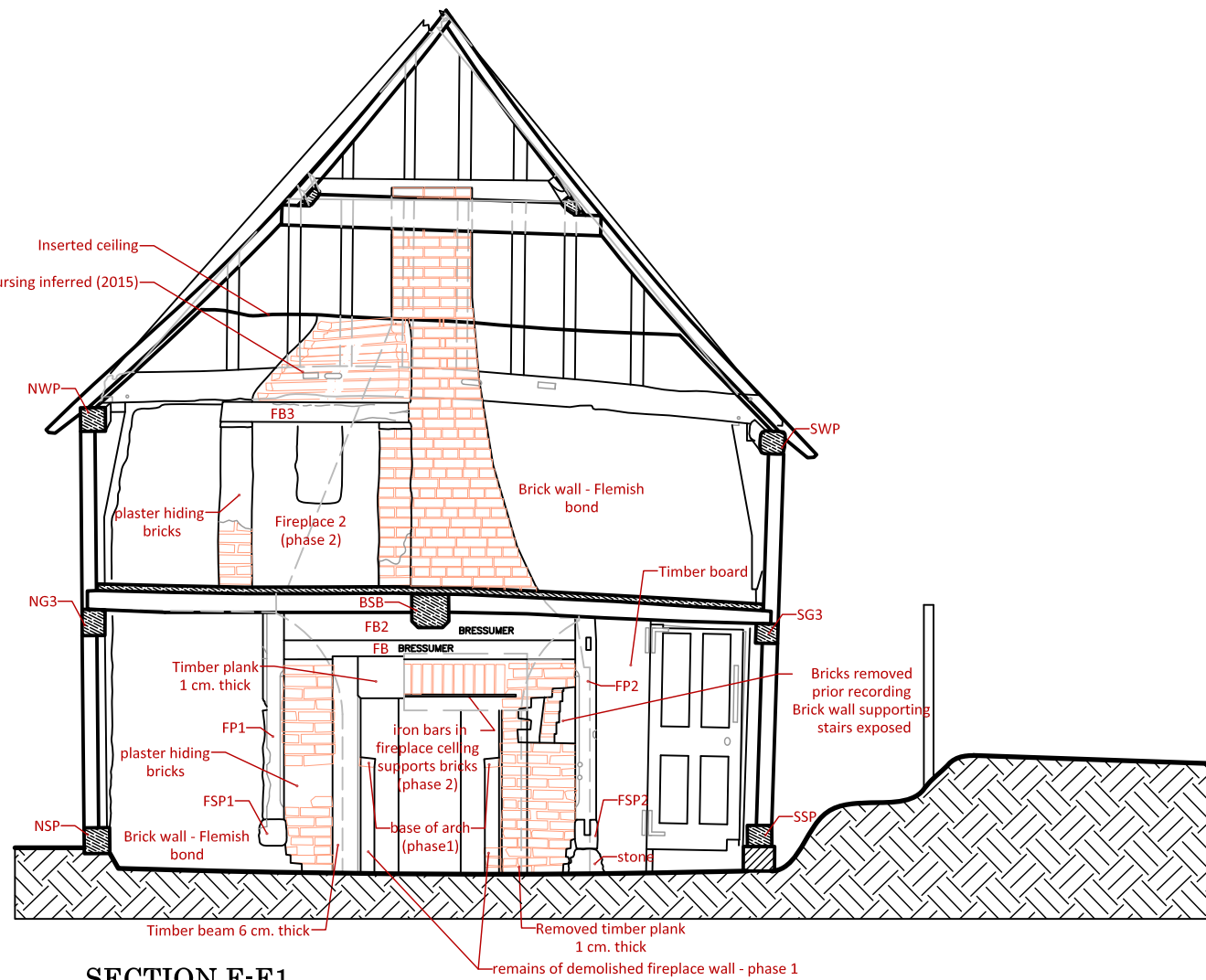
7.83m OD ▼

FLOOR 6.99m OD ▼

6.23m OD ▼

TOP OF SOLE
PLATE 5.25m OD ▼

FLOOR 4.92m OD ▼

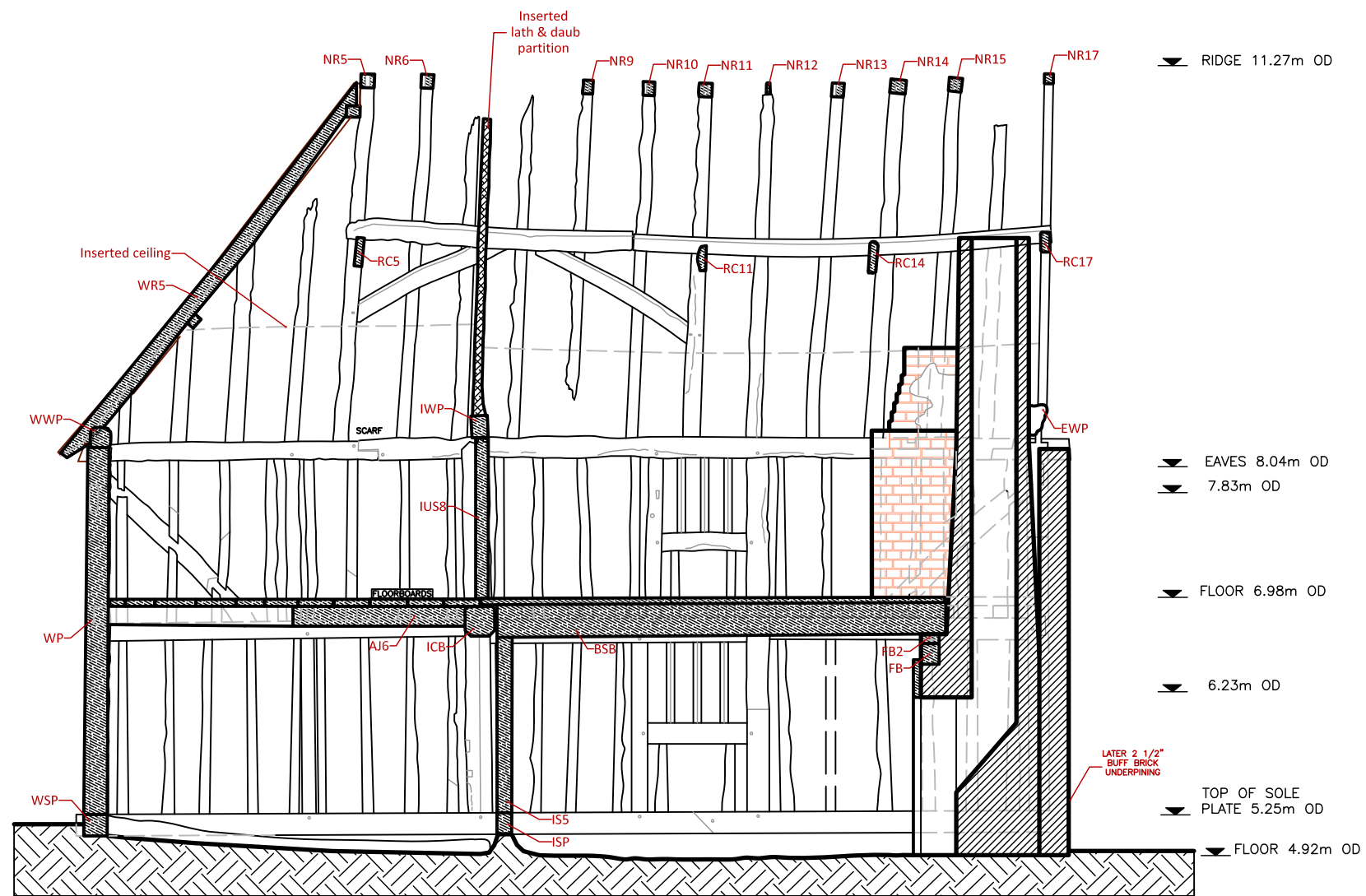


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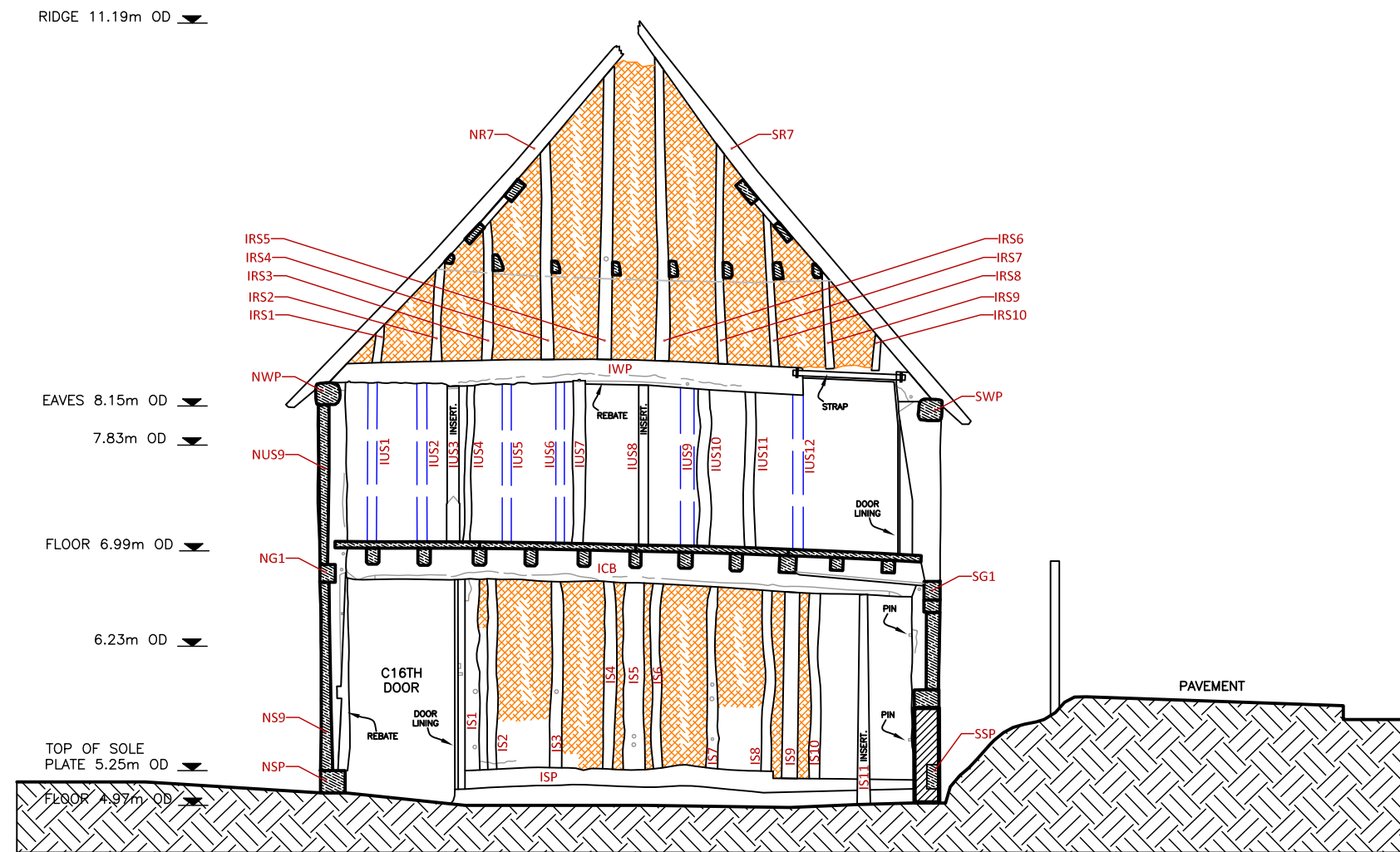


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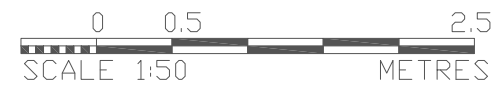


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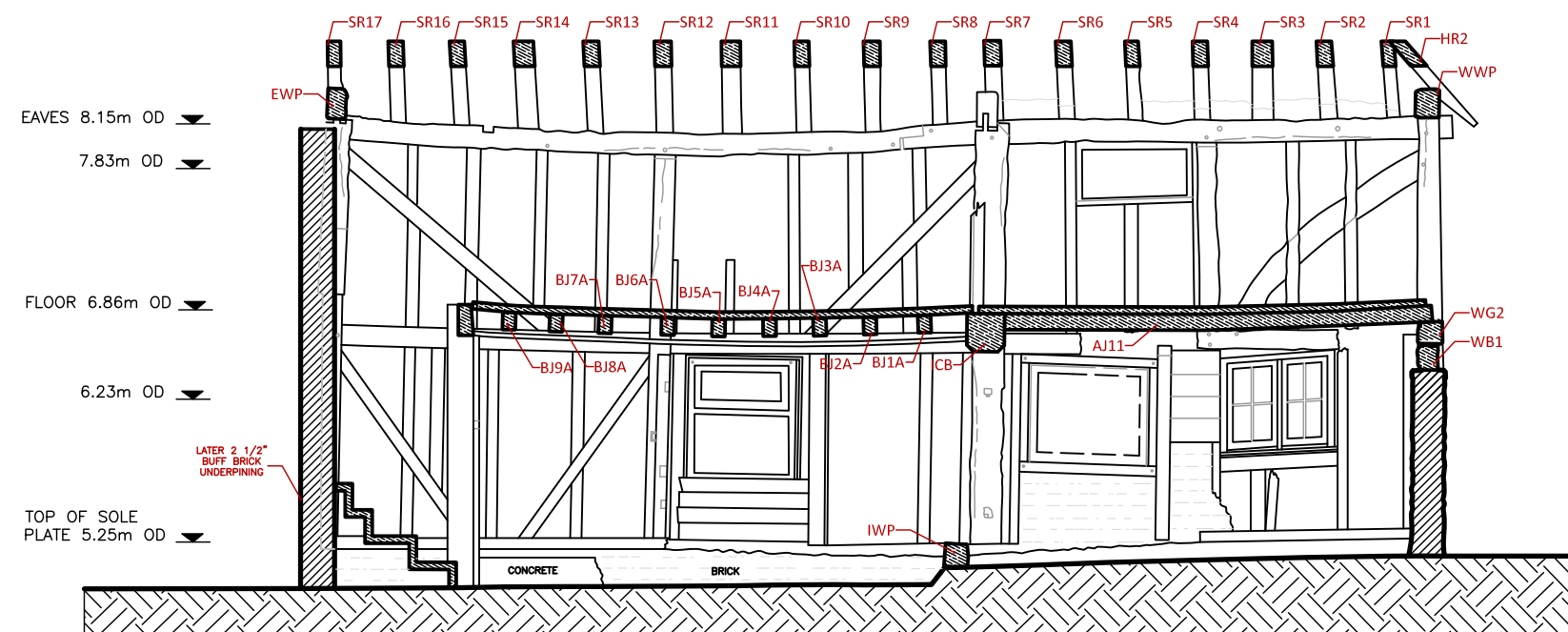


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RIDGE 11.19m OD ▼

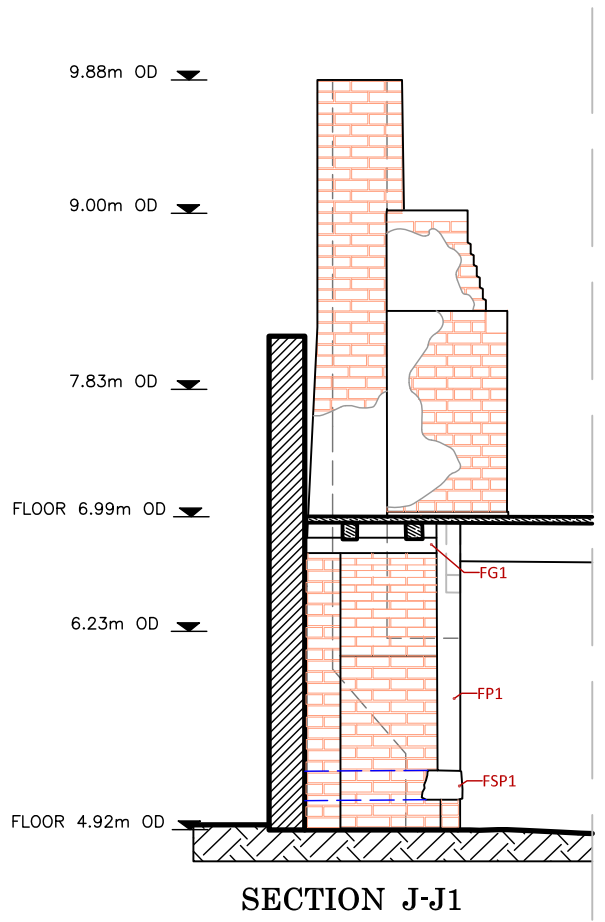
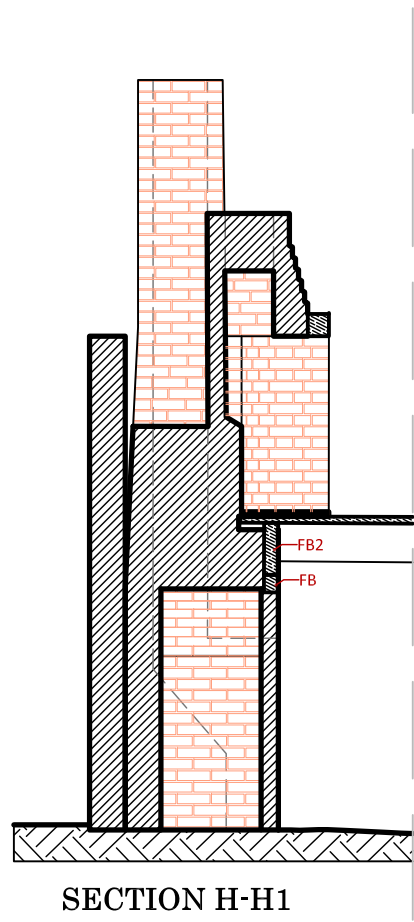
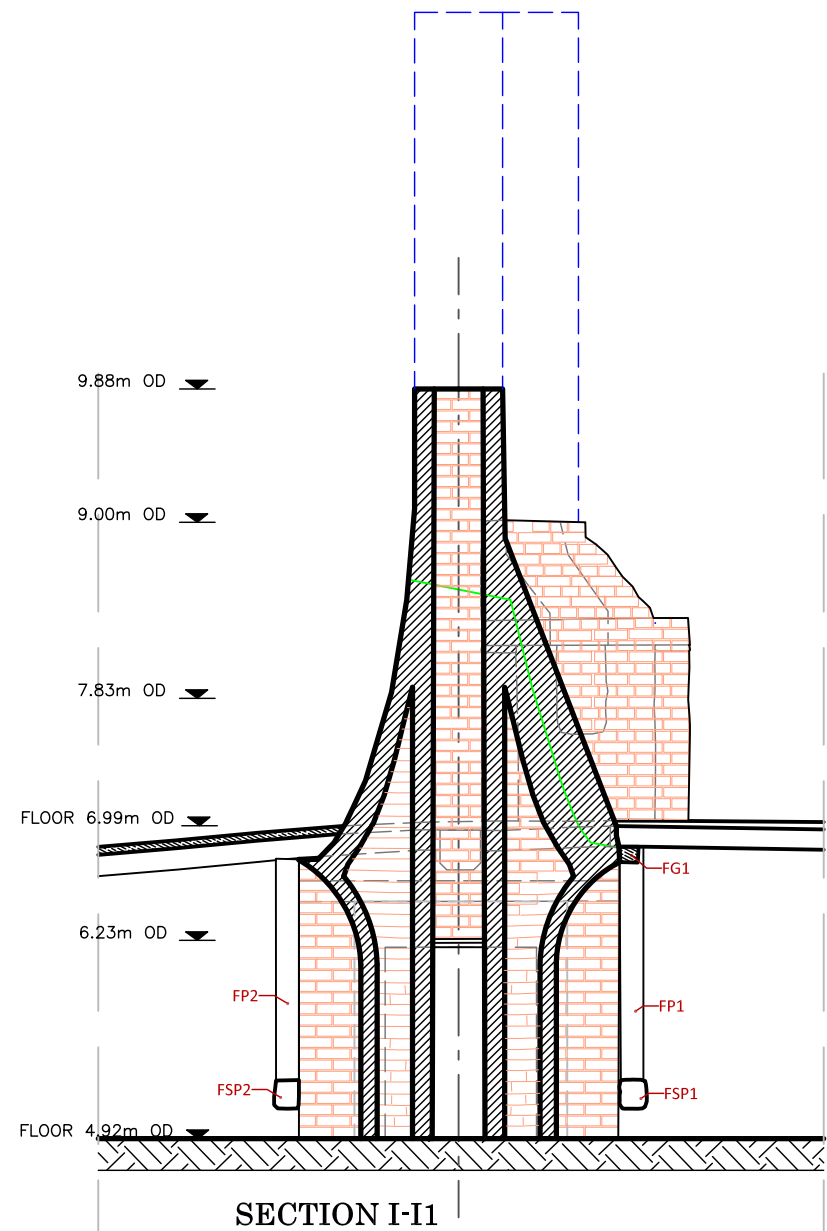
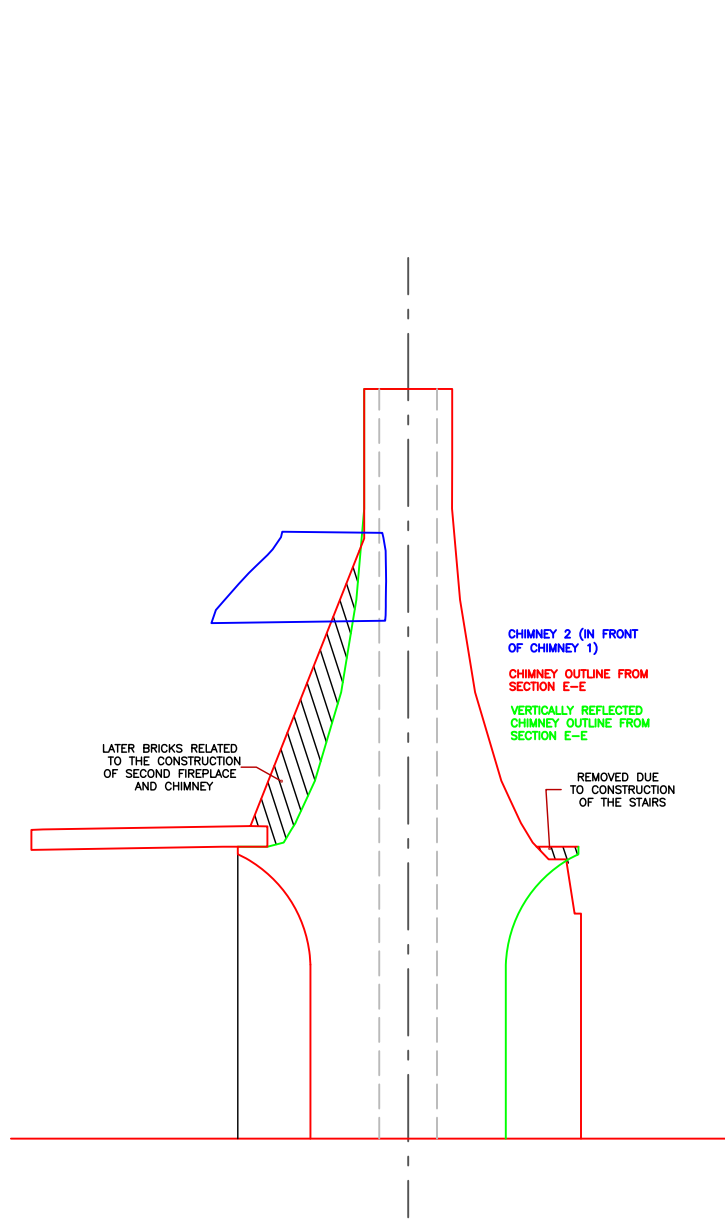


SECTION A-A1



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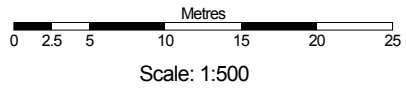
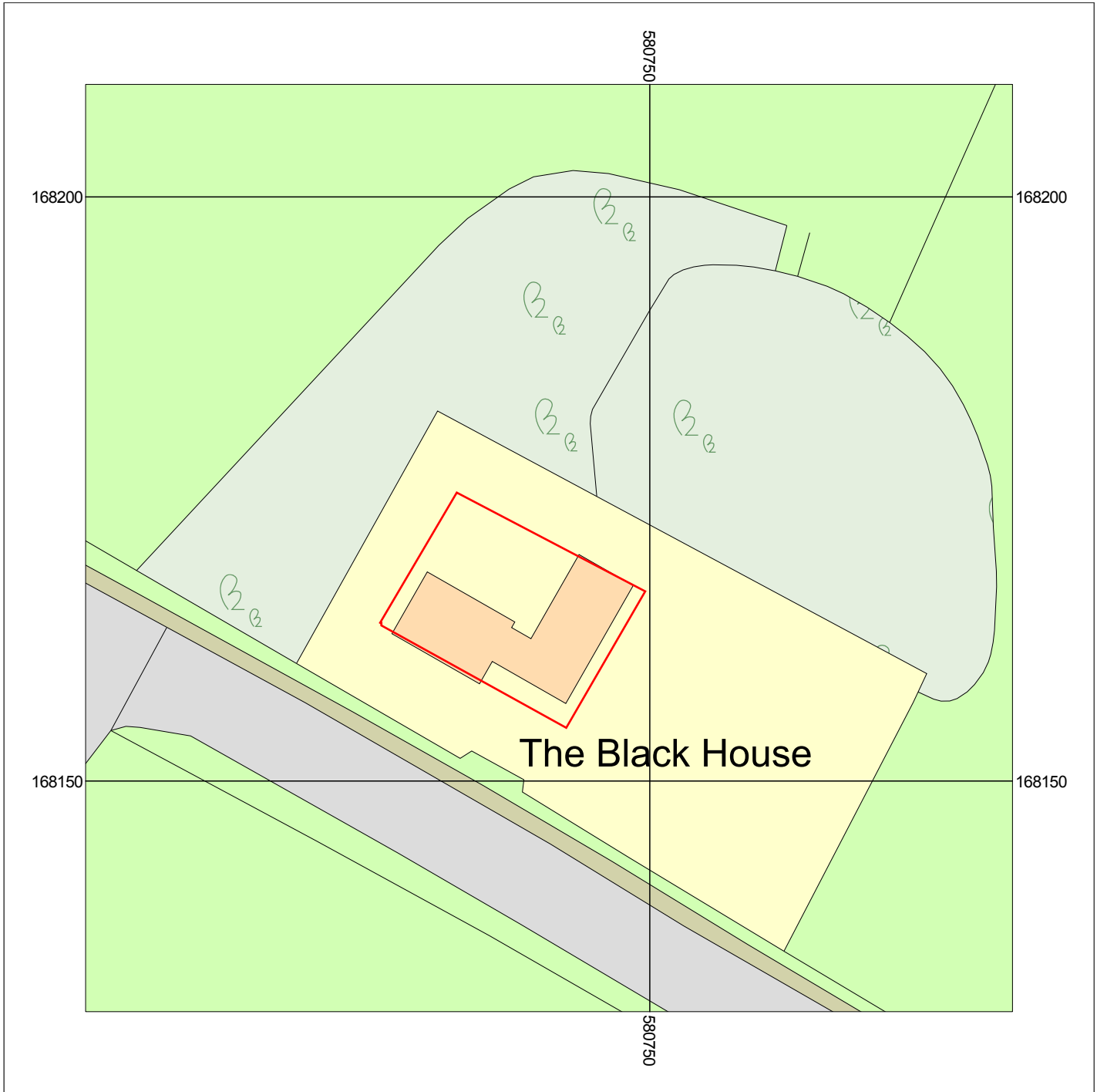




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DRAWING NUMBER: 16	SITE CODE: BH-BR15	
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Figure 1
Location of site and
area watched



The Black House,
Lower Rainham Road
Rainham
Gillingham
ME7 2XH

Supplied by: National Map Centre
License number: 100031961
Produced: 18/01/2019
Serial number: 2070868

Plot centre co-ordinates: 580741,168170
Download file: black.zip
Project name: swat1